Silvertown & Blackwall Tunnel Charges London Travel Guide

The Thames crossings at Blackwall and Silvertown have long been vital connections between the north and south banks of the river for anyone who lives in or passes through East London. For many years, the Blackwall Tunnel was the workhorse; it was free to use but frequently crowded and temperamental. There has been a significant change when the new Silvertown Tunnel opened in 2025: both tunnels have a cost. This implies that whether you're going on a weekend getaway, commuting, or making deliveries, you'll need to budget for the **Blackwall Tunnel charge** or the Silvertown Tunnel charge.

To help you plan your trip without any surprises, this guide lays down everything you need to know, including expenses, payment options, and who is exempt.

1. Why Charges Exist

The introduction of the Blackwall Tunnel charge and the Silvertown Tunnel charge is a component of Transport for London's (TfL) strategy to control traffic and air quality, and it goes beyond simply raising money. In the past, rush-hour traffic jams at the Blackwall Tunnel caused delays that may last for kilometres. To alleviate the strain, a parallel path beneath the Thames was created with the Silvertown Tunnel. However, increasing capacity without controlling demand might have just boosted traffic.

By applying the same toll to both tunnels, TfL aims to:

- Limit the amount of traffic and keep one tunnel from becoming the "free" choice.
- Finance the Silvertown project's construction and upkeep, which came to about £2.2 billion.
- Promote eco-friendly modes of transportation, such as bicycles and public transportation.

2. How Much Do You Pay

The type of vehicle you drive, the time of day you travel, and whether you sign up for TfL Auto Pay all affect the charges.

Auto Pay rates for vehicles and small vans:

- Peak (Mon–Fri, 06:00–10:00 headway; 16:00–19:00 headway): £4.00
- Off-peak: £1.50

Regarding motorbikes (Auto Pay):

- Peak: £2.50
- Off-peak: £1.50

For small lorries and big vans:

- Peak: £6.50
- Off-peak: £2.50

Regarding heavy-duty vehicles (HGVs):

- Peak: £10.00
- Off-peak: £5.00

No matter when you go, you will always be charged the highest cost for your car if you don't have Auto Pay. This can have a significant impact, particularly for those who commute regularly.

3. When the Charges Apply

Except for Christmas Day, tolls are in place daily from 6:00 to 22:00.

Outside these hours, both tunnels are free from 22:00 to 6:00. Avoiding the toll can be as easy as modifying your travel schedule for those who work at night, travel late at night, or deliver goods early in the morning.

4. How to Pay Blackwall Tunnel or Silvertown Tunnel Charges

There is no barrier or cash booth; all tolls are collected digitally.

Payment options:

1. **TfL Auto Pay (strongly recommended)**

- Connect your account and your car registration.
- Take advantage of automated invoicing and the lowest price.
- Steer clear of unintentional fines.

2. **Online payment via the TfL website.**
3. **TfL app payment.**
4. **Phone payment.**

You will receive a £180 penalty charge notice if you don't pay within three days after your trip (it will be lowered to £90 if you pay within 14 days). This holds regardless of whether you forgot or were unaware that you needed to pay Silvertown Tunnel or the Blackwall Tunnel.

5. Exemptions and Discounts

Not everyone is required to pay the toll for the Blackwall Tunnel. The following are not included:

- coaches and buses.
- Taxis and some private automobiles for hire.
- holders of the Blue Badge (registration required in advance).
- Private rental cars that are wheelchair accessible and registered with TfL.
- Private rental cars with zero emissions (also registered).

Some inhabitants of Tower Hamlets, Newham, and Greenwich are eligible for local discounts, as are small businesses and charitable organisations. This can result in off-peak prices as low as £1.

6. Public Transport Alternatives

If you want to avoid the Blackwall Tunnel charge and Silvertown Tunnel charge overall, you have several excellent choices:

- **Bus routes through Silvertown Tunnel:**

Until at least April 2026, SL4 and Route 129 will be free to use and have zero emissions.

- **Cycling:**

During its first year, the Silvertown Tunnel provided a free bicycle shuttle service.

- **Woolwich Ferry:**

Although it's busier currently since some drivers are rerouting to avoid the toll, it's still free.

- **Docklands Light Railway (DLR) or Jubilee line:**

Perfect for fast Thames crossings without having to bother about parking or tolls.

7. Tips for Regular Travellers

1. **Register for Auto Pay:**

This should go without saying if you cross frequently.

2. **Travel off-peak:**

You can save more than half by scheduling your trip outside of busy times.

3. **Combine trips:**

If at all feasible, schedule visits or errands such that you only cross once instead of several times.

4. **Check exemptions:**

particularly if you have mobility concerns or drive for employment.

5. **Use alternatives:**

Public transport or the Woolwich Ferry may be slower, but they can save you money.

8. The Bigger Picture

There is controversy around the decision to impose a toll on the Blackwall tunnel. Advocates cite a cleaner atmosphere, shorter average travel times, and less traffic. Critics contend that it is an additional burden on delivery drivers, tradespeople, and commuters who are already struggling.

According to preliminary monitoring, there has been some traffic displacement, with more cars utilising the Woolwich Ferry and other crossings, although both tunnels' flows are now more consistent. The statistics will eventually show whether the policy strikes a balance between generating income, managing traffic, and protecting the environment.

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For many passengers, remembering to pay tolls, checking peak hours, and dealing with PCNs is more trouble than it's worth. That's why **Minicabs.co.uk** offers a seamless alternative.

When you use us to reserve a minicab:

- There are no hidden fees because your fare covers all tunnel charges.
- No registration or TfL payment management is required.
- Prevent expensive penalties or late payments.
- Get quickly picked up and dropped off in East and South London.

FAQs:

1. **Do I have to pay for both tunnels if I cross one after the other?**

There are no fees for each crossing. You pay the Blackwall Tunnel fee if you enter the Blackwall Tunnel and the Silvertown Tunnel fee if you enter Silvertown.

2. **What if I make a return journey in one day?**

Even if you make two crossings on the same day, you will be charged separately for each one.

3. **Is there a daily cap?**

No, there is no upper limit; instead, you pay for each crossing during charging hours, unlike London's Congestion Charge.

4. **Can I appeal a penalty?**

Yes, if you think the charge against you was incorrect. Appeals are unlikely to be successful, however, if you just neglected to pay.

Meta Title:

Silvertown & Blackwall Tunnel Charges 2025 – Toll Costs, How to Pay & Travel Tips

Meta Description:

Plan your London Thames crossing with our 2025 guide to the Blackwall Tunnel charge & Silvertown Tunnel charge. See toll costs, peak/off-peak times, payment options, and free alternatives. Avoid penalties – check our tips now!